

The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea

The Early Medieval North Atlantic

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The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea

Manannán and His Neighbors

Edited by

Charles W. MacQuarrie and Joseph Falaky Nagy

Amsterdam University Press

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Map of the Irish Sea and Northern Sea Area c. 1000–1200 CE



Preface

This book derives from a 2015 Summer Seminar for University Professors, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities of Washington, D.C. The seminar commenced on June 8 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and ended on July 12, in Glasgow, Scotland, after an extended stay in Douglas on the Isle of Man. The co-editors of this volume, who were also the co-directors of the seminar, are forever indebted to the extraordinary participants, our colleagues and friends, whose research projects, presentations, and contributions to the lively and provocative discussions helped to make the experience so memorable and productive. In addition to the authors of the essays included herein, those participants included Kay J. Blalock, Tracey Cooper, Emily C. Cox, Donna E. Crawford, Sandy Feinstein, Leslie Jacoby, and Jeff A. Rudy. Thank you all!

We are also grateful to the NEH itself, especially Doug Arnold and Rebecca Boggs, as well as to our gracious hosts and invited seminar speakers—Thomas Clancy, Peter Davey, Jennifer Kewley-Draskau, James P. Mallory, Gregory Toner, Sir David Wilson, and M. Joseph Wolf—and to our redoubtable administrative coordinator, Milissa Ackerly. Special thanks to the indispensable Andrea Weikel, who completed the final accounting on the grant. We would also like to acknowledge the Centre for Manx Studies, formerly a research unit of the University of Liverpool; the Manx National Heritage and the Isle of Man Museums, for letting the members of the seminar use their facilities and resources, for providing photographs of items from their remarkable archaeological collection for our publication, and for permitting us to quote extracts from the Manx Folk-Life Survey Archive; the Royal Overseas League in Edinburgh; Strathmillis College in Belfast; and the University of Glasgow. This grateful acknowledgment extends to Peter Killey, who has allowed us to use his beautiful photograph on the cover.

Of course, our heartfelt gratitude goes out in a special way to the Amsterdam University Press, in particular Erin Dailey (who, in addition to all his editorial assistance, so expertly designed a map for us), Lucia Dove, and Chantal Nicolaes. Without the guidance, wisdom, and faith in the project with which they honored us, our book could not have become a reality.

Charles W. MacQuarrie
Joseph Falaky Nagy

Introduction

Manannán and His Neighbors

Charles W. MacQuarrie

Keywords: Manannán, kingship of Man, Anglesey, Lordship of the Isles, *Cronica Regum Mannie et Insularum*, linguistic microcosm

The Isle of Man occupied a place both central and peripheral in the history of the North Atlantic. Because of its location it was, no doubt, central to the sea trade routes in and around the Irish Sea region already in the prehistorical period, and in the medieval period it played an important role in the politics of Ireland, England, Wales, and Scotland, and was by 1000 CE an important seat of Scandinavian power. Later, in a related development, Somerled Macgilbred, the first Lord of the Isles, seized the Hebrides from the King of Man, and took the title King of the Hebrides and King of Man, although the Lordship of the Isles never actually included the Isle of Man.¹ Before and after its domination by the Norse, Man clearly was a place known to and settled by speakers of Celtic languages, from both sides of the Irish Sea. For example, in an anecdote told in the late Old Irish text known as “Cormac’s Glossary” (*Sanas Cormaic*, dated to the late first millennium CE), the island appears as a place of exile for a lost-and-found poetess, as well as a base of mercantile operations, inhabited by Manannán mac Lir, believed by the pagan Irish to have been a god, but who was in fact, according to the author, a successful merchant and seaman.² An Irish Sea Shangri-La or Bali Hai of

¹ Rosemary Power, “The Isle of Man and the Kings of Norway: Magnús Barelegs and After,” in *A New History of the Isle of Man*, vol. 3: *The Medieval Period 1000–1406*, ed. Seán Duffy and Harold Mytum (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 27–57.

² Alongside an introduction to the text, the relevant passages are translated and discussed by Paul Russell in “Poets, Power and Possessions in Medieval Ireland: Some Stories from *Sanas Cormaic*,” in *Law, Literature and Society*, ed. Joseph F. Eska, CSANA Yearbook 7 (Dublin: Four Courts, 2008), 9–45.

sorts, Man seems to have held a significant place in the mythology of the Irish and to have been associated with the supernatural via its connection with the ubiquitous Manannán, who in later folklore is said to protect the island by shrouding it in mist.³

Its mysterious protector notwithstanding, Man, as the historian Sir David Wilson has pointed out, did fall prey to the vicissitudes of history, undergoing various economic undulations.⁴ While there was a significant amount of commerce involving the island during the Lordship of the Isles—tellingly, a mint was established there already c. 1025⁵—and it served as a waypoint for Scandinavian trade from Dublin up through the Irish Sea into the North Sea, after the coming of English rule c. 1400 the Isle of Man suffered a significant economic decline, changing from a trade-based to a largely self-sustaining agrarian economy.⁶ Over time it alternated between being a thriving place of promise and one of poverty and isolation. Rosemary Power notes that the island was the site of legendary figures, and medieval accounts of deeds from the heroic past seem to represent it, in the Old Norse *Orkneyinga saga* (c. 1200) and other sagas, as “the extremity of the known world.”⁷

Already mentioned above was the island’s centrality at one time to the political hegemony of the Lordship of the Isles in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE. It was at the yearly Tynwald (a traditional assembly still held on the island) that the “keys of Man” came together, that is, the representatives of the various groups from Iona to the Shetlands who were voting members of the confederation centered on the Lordship.⁸ And yet Man was also viewed in some premodern sources as a distant island, unsettled, and rebarbative, whose few inhabitants were both disturbingly *recherché* and yet poetically, magically powerful. Even though the “Mona” mentioned by Tacitus as the

3 For a more extensive discussion of this topic see Charles MacQuarrie, “The Isle of Man in Early Irish Literature,” *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, 5 vols, ed. John T. Koch (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 1: 377–79, and “The Isle of Man in Medieval Gaelic Literature,” in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 281–304.

4 David Wilson, “Introduction—Setting the Scene: Man at the Turn of the Millenium,” in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 1–8.

5 Wilson, “Introduction,” 2 and 5; Benjamin Hudson, “The Isle of Man in a European Context,” in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 187–209, at 194–96; David Ditchburn and Benjamin Hudson “Economy and Trade in Medieval Man,” in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 377–410, at 396; Kristin Bornholdt Collins “Coinage,” Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 411–65, at 412, 423, 425, 427–23, 440.

6 Power, “Isle of Man and the Kings of Norway,” 49–50.

7 Power, “Isle of Man and the Kings of Norway,” 29.

8 Ruth Constain-Russell, “The Reigns of Guthröthr and Rögnvaldr, 1153–1229,” in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 78–96, at 78.

home base of druids and druidism is presumed by scholars to be Anglesey, as we shall discuss presently Man and Anglesey are closely connected in the Classical imagination. Man, the traditional residence of the figure Manannán mac Lir who in Irish sources is sometimes said to be the king of the supernatural Túatha Dé Danann, has plenty of otherworldly cachet.⁹ Writing about the land assessments and divisions of Man and their connections to Welsh, Irish, Scottish, and English models, Gareth Williams points out that one of the most solid transmarine connections in the pre-Norse history of the Isle of Man was its connection with the Welsh dynasty of the kingdom of Gwynedd (northwestern Wales), of which Anglesey was an important part. He further observes that Anglesey and the Isle of Man are thought of as a pair by Bede and other early authors.¹⁰ Man, far more so than Anglesey, is cast in some medieval Irish sources as the sanctuary or place of exile for visionary poets as well as a prison and place of exile (something in between Australia and Alcatraz) for aristocratic political prisoners.¹¹

The oxymoronic nature of the island, like that of its most famous resident Manannán himself, is sometimes sweet and at other times sour, or calm and then stormy, a contrast mirrored in the bifurcated realms of the religious and the secular, as important on the Island as they were throughout medieval Europe. One of the few medieval sources thought to have been written on the Isle of Man, the *Cronica Regum Manniae et Insularum* (*Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles*), which covers the period from c. 1000 to 1316 CE, gives us only a few details about the life, language, and culture of the everyday people of the Island in those times. Primarily dealing with matters pertaining to the Viking ruler Magnus, son of Olaf, during whose reign (c. 1250–65) the bulk of it was probably recorded, the *Cronica* also gives us details about various

9 The Túatha Dé Danann are one of the mythological populations said to have preceded the Irish on the island in some of our medieval Irish sources. In some (later medieval) texts, such as *Altram Tige Dá Medhar* (The nourishing of the house of the two milk-pails), Manannán mac Lir is described as the king of the Túatha Dé Danann. They were thought to live in an otherworld which is often imagined to be underground, sometimes thought to be under or over the sea, and is putatively connected to the Isle of Man, which is sometimes identified as Emain Abhlach ("the Plain of Apples") and may be connected to magical Avalon from Arthurian tradition. See Charles MacQuarrie, *The Biography of the Irish God of the Sea from the Voyage of Bran (c.700 A.D.) to Finnegans Wake (1939): The Waves of Manannán mac Lir* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), 9–11 and 333–35. See also MacQuarrie, "Isle of Man in Early Irish Literature," 377–79.

10 Gareth Williams, "The System of Land Division and Assessment," in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 466–83, at 476.

11 Occluded residents of the island include the female poetess mentioned as living there in *Sanas Cormaic* (see above). The Isle of Man is also the place where the legendary lovers of the medieval Irish Ulster cycle, Deirdriu and Noisíu, spend part of their exile—see note 2 and 9 above, MacQuarrie, *Biography*, 223–27.

other kings and monks, with its interest seemingly centered on Rushen Abbey.¹² Indeed, as Peter Davey observes, the monks were perhaps even more interesting to the anonymous chronicler than the monarchs. While eremitically inclined holy men from Ireland, Wales, and Scotland no doubt had used the island as a place of ascetic isolation from the early Middle Ages on, by 1130 a more elaborate monastic system was being established on Man, partly at the behest of the kings of Man, who in their backgrounds reflected the fusion of Gaelic and Norse populations in Ireland and Scotland.¹³

The Manx language, which probably coexisted with and succeeded the British Celtic languages spoken on the island in the early years of the first millennium CE, is grounded in Irish, with lexical borrowing from Latin, Norse, Anglo-Norman, and English. It therefore presents a linguistic microcosm of the multifaceted complexity that characterizes the history of Man as sketched above.¹⁴ The archeological record left on the island is no less complex, and the numismatic evidence bears witness to dramatic political and economic change. Coins from Dublin mints give way to those produced on the island in the later first millennium CE, after which imported coins alternate, in the period 1000 to 1400, with coinage traceable in turn to England, Ireland, and Scotland.¹⁵

Peripheral and isolated yet at the same time central and cosmopolitan—a palimpsest of multilingual and multicultural hybridity—the Isle of Man both was heavily influenced by and widely influenced its neighbors in the North Atlantic, helping to create and consolidate a maritime culture and economy throughout the area. Yet, while the surviving evidence—literary, archaeological, numismatic—provides valuable clues, there is still much we do not know about Manx history. Perhaps the most compelling witnesses to the past of the island are the standing stones and crosses that often bear traces of the languages that were spoken at this nexus point in the middle of the Irish Sea. Inscriptions in Latin and Irish, Welsh names, and Norse stories (represented pictorially and with runes) on the Manx stones—all these testify to a complexity of origin and influence, inviting reflection and research, and set the tone for the bold and intellectually honest work that characterizes this edited volume of research essays, which were gestated

12 Seán Duffy, “Man and the Irish Sea World in the Eleventh Century,” in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 9–26, at 16–17, and Bernadette Williams, “The Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles,” in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 305–28, at 306–28.

13 P.J. Davey, “Medieval Monasticism and the Isle of Man c.1130–1540,” in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 349–76, at 349.

14 R.L. Thompson, “Language in Man: Prehistory to Literacy,” in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 241–56, at 245–47.

15 Collins “Coinage,” 411.

on the Isle of Man and then developed by our contributors in the weeks, months, and years that followed.

Chapter 1. Innovatively tapping into the extensive numismatic evidence, Helen Davies analyzes the complex political and economic dynamic that extended across the Irish Sea, particularly between the Viking kingdom of Dublin and the rulers of the Isle of Man, during the late first and early second millennium CE. This period provides the background to the author's study of the evidence for a more subtle balance of power obtaining in this relationship than what previous studies have proposed.

Chapter 2. Contributed by M. Wendy Hennequin, this essay centers on the figure of (H)unferth in *Beowulf*, offering an innovative view of the oft-debated function of this character in the story the Old English poem tells. Instead of viewing Hunferth's challenge to Beowulf as gratuitously antagonistic, Hennequin analyzes it in terms of stylized forms of incitement, as documented in the early medieval literatures of Ireland, Britain, and Scandinavia.

Chapter 3. A scholar of drama and dance, Ron J. Popenhagen advances our understanding of the somatic basis of the medieval Irish hero Cú Chulainn's heroism—that is, the remarkably exposed and shifting state(s) of his body as evident in saga literature when it describes his performance in battle. “Performance” is indeed the key word, for, as Popenhagen observes, Cú Chulainn like other heroes of the medieval Irish Sea milieu, triumphs by virtue not only of the remarkable feats of which he and/or his body are capable, but also of his theatrical presentation of himself.

Chapter 4. Brian Cook provides a clearheaded overview of the complications of text, transmission, and provenance evidenced in a major medieval Icelandic chronicle of northwest European politics, the *Orkneyinga saga*. Cook focuses on the connivances of the legendary queen Ragnhild and their impact upon North Sea islands and kingdoms. Is she a Norse reflex or importation of the Irish sovereignty figure? And, as deadly as it might be, does sexual association with such a figure endow her lovers with legendary cachet? These are among the questions Cook attempts to answer.

Chapter 5. Classicist Stephen Kershner, using the lens of Statius and the tradition of Roman epic, finds meaningful patterns in what the medieval Irish translator of the *Thebaid* kept and didn't keep of the Roman poet's sensitive framing of the story of the Seven against Thebes. In simultaneously embracing and distancing itself from its Latin source, this Middle Irish text reveals the long-lasting impact of Statius on the literature of early Ireland, Britain, and the Western Middle Ages in general.

Chapter 6. Rhonda Knight intrepidly re-examines the connections between the Stanley family, sometimes known as the “Kings of Man” during the period

of English domination, and what has been called a “farrago” of texts contained in the famous seventeenth-century manuscript known as the Percy Folio. The mysterious and disruptive outsider of medieval romance together with the marcher lord, a major player in the politics of late medieval and early modern Britain, come together in the Percy Folio to provide posterity with a picture, vividly presented in Knight’s essay, of a turbulent and changing society.

Chapter 7. Maria McGarrity examines Seamus Heaney’s rendering of *Beowulf* in the context of the poet’s probings of the interface between the Irish and English languages, and that between the British and Irish registers of English itself. Heaney’s choices of vocabulary and phrases, ranging from the subtle to the conspicuous, are shown artfully to recast the Old English masterpiece in a contemporary dialogue, not at all free from tension, among neighboring cultures of the Irish Sea Cultural Province.

Chapter 8. Ethel B. Bowden, a scholar of children’s and young people’s literature, employs approaches borrowed from her field to take a fresh look at the “heroic biography” model by which the boyhood deeds of the medieval Irish hero Cú Chulainn have been interpreted by earlier scholars. The author concludes by considering the implications and consequences (including the “pluses” and “minuses”) of introducing the narrative life and times of such early medieval heroes—given these stories’ undeniable surfeit of violence—into the contemporary classroom.

Chapter 9. In the concluding contribution to this collection, Marc Pierce, a specialist in Germanic historical linguistics, presents an insightful juxtaposition of the modern histories of Manx and “Texas German.” He focuses his analysis on the question, why and how has Manx been revived in modern times to at least a limited extent, while the German once spoken extensively in Texas has fared far less well.

About the author

Charles W. MacQuarrie is a Professor of English at California State University, Bakersfield. He is the author of two books on Manannán mac Lir, one an academic monograph and the other a collection of translations primarily intended for children. He has also frequently presented and written on, and continues to research, the history, myth, and folklore associated with Celtic tattooing. He is the former editor of the Celtic Studies of North America newsletter, has directed or co-directed four National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminars, and is a long-time Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

1. Hiberno-Manx Coins in the Irish Sea

Helen Davies

Abstract

Innovatively tapping into the extensive numismatic evidence, Helen Davies analyzes the complex political and economic dynamic that extended across the Irish Sea, particularly between the Viking kingdom of Dublin and the rulers of the Isle of Man, during the late first and early second millennium CE. This period provides the background to the author's study of the evidence for a more subtle balance of power obtaining in this relationship than what previous studies have proposed.

Keywords: Glenfaba hoard, Dublin, Hiberno-Manx coins, Godred Crovan, Viking Age, kingship

The Hiberno-Manx coinage of the late Viking Age provides a window onto the economic and political situation of this period. Limited textual material survives to illuminate the years of the Hiberno-Manx mint, approximately 1020–65.¹ Extant archaeological evidence provides intriguing hints, but these coins greatly increase the surviving material record. The coins, which derive from the Hiberno-Norse Dublin Phase II “Long Cross” type, were first identified by Michael Dolley in 1976. These artifacts support recent arguments about the connection between the Isle of Man and the Hiberno-Norse city-state based in Dublin. The creation of local coinage based on the Dublin model highlights political ties and movement of ideas within this obscure era of Manx history, allowing us to shed new light on Man's role in the politics of the Irish Sea region.

This article treats the numismatic evidence alongside the surviving textual and archaeological record in an effort to further understand the political situation in the Isle of Man shortly *before* the establishment of the kingdom

1 David M. Wilson, *The Vikings in the Isle of Man* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2008), 115.

of Man and the Isles.² To this end, I will first introduce the documentary and material evidence as a way of examining the current level of understanding about late Viking Age Man, underscoring the gaps in our knowledge about this period that the coin evidence can fill. The second part of this essay provides a detailed description of the numismatic evidence with reference to the recent work on Manx hoarding. Here, I lay out the significance of the valuable data we can glean from the coins and the startling richness of this Manx material, especially when contrasted with comparable physical evidence from the surrounding Irish Sea region. The essay draws to a close with conclusions regarding the political ties and independence of Man.

The early eleventh-century Irish Sea region was a vibrant cultural zone supporting intricate networks of trade and political allegiances. Though often overlooked by historians of the period due to scant textual evidence, the Isle of Man sat at the heart of it all. Man served as an important link between Anglo-Saxon England, the Anglo-Scandinavian kingdom of York, the Norse Gael-Gall (Irish-Viking) political power in the Hebrides and mainland Scotland to its east, and the various Irish political units, including Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin, to its west. Despite this central location and obvious position of power in controlling access across the Irish Sea, scholars have relatively little evidence for the Viking Age on Man. No written sources native to the island survive from before 1079, when the kingdom of Man and the Isles was established, and archaeological evidence from this period is also limited. This gives Man's Viking Age coins, which survive in remarkable abundance, an important role to play in helping us understand the political situation during this time period.

Textual Sources

The year 1079 was a watershed moment in Manx history. This year marks the invasion of the Isle of Man by Godred Crovan, whose successful conquest was a shift in the power dynamic of the Irish Sea. At that moment the kingdom of Man and the Isles emerged, marking the birth of a new political power. The founding of this kingdom also signified a change in the surviving records. Before this date, no native texts from Man itself survive. Around

2 Unfortunately, Rory Naismith's article "The Isle of Man and 'Irish Sea' Coinage," in *Medieval European Coinage: With a Catalogue of the Coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Britain and Ireland c. 400–1066*, ed. Rory Naismith (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 315–22, was published too late for me to consult it while writing this piece.

1260 the *Cronica Regum Manniæ et Insularum* (hereafter the *Chronicle of Man*) began to record history on Man from a Manx perspective. The text describes events starting in the eleventh century, shortly before Crovan's conquest.³ Importantly for this essay, it provides the earliest native record of the political structure in Man. The *Chronicle of Man* contains a brief reference to a Godred, son of Syrtric, who was king of Man at the time of the Battle of Hastings. His son Fingall then briefly succeeded him before the invasion of Godred Crovan, who became the first king of Man and the Isles to be documented in native texts.⁴

This seizing of power by Godred Crovan appears to have destabilized the minting authority on Man. No historical or numismatic evidence survives for the continued minting of coins after this date.⁵ The inception of this kingdom appears to have resulted in either the cessation of the monetary standard or of the political alliance governing the centralization and creation of coinage. The time disparity between the *Chronicle of Man* and the Hiberno-Manx coins prevents them from corresponding directly to one another. However, scholars can elongate the known timeline in Man by combining these two sources.⁶ The *Chronicle of Man*, by and large, does not directly parallel the information contained on the coins regarding Viking Age Man, nor does it reveal further information about the minting of the coins themselves. However, some of the earliest entries when combined with the limited non-Manx material can shed light on the question of which centralized political figure would have had the authority to create a national coinage.

The limited local textual sources have long encouraged scholars to look outside of Man for documentary references to the Island.⁷ The Icelandic sagas

3 *The Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys: Chronica Regum Manniæ et Insularum*, 2 vols, ed. and trans by the Rev. Dr. Gross (Douglas, Isle of Man: Manx Historical Society, 1874).

4 Gross, *Chronicle of Man*, years 1047–56, at 1: 50–51. It should be noted that the years vary from currently accepted historical timelines. For example, this document dates the Battle of Hastings to the year 1047, subsequently corrected to 1066.

5 A.M. Cubbon, "The 1972 Kirk Michael Viking Treasure Trove: The Hoard; Its Discovery, Composition and General Historical Implications," *Journal of the Manx Museum* 8, no. 89 (1980), 5–11, at 10. Allison Fox and Kristin Bornholdt Collins, "The 2003 'TT': A Viking-Age Silver Hoard from Glenfaba, Isle of Man," *Viking Heritage Magazine* 1 (2004), 3–5, at 4.

6 Kristin Bornholdt Collins argues that the *Chronicle of Man*, although later than the coins, still has value for this time period as the only native source which draws on local knowledge; Collins, "Viking Age Coins from the Isle of Man: A Study of Coin Production, Circulation, and Concepts of Wealth," PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2003, 45.

7 Collins' dissertation has a thorough survey of textual references that may be referring to the Isle of Man, from the ninth through the twelfth centuries. Seán Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen in the Kingdoms of Dublin and Man, 1052–1171," *Ériu* 43 (1992), 93–133, presents an

present complications when looked to as a source for historical knowledge, yet they may contain some historical memory of the time they purport to describe.⁸ *Njal's Saga* survives in manuscripts from the end of the thirteenth century, but describes Viking Age events in the Irish Sea.⁹ This late text contains a reference to the "King of the Isle of Man" during the Viking Age.¹⁰ While readers cannot rely on this reference as documentary evidence for a Viking Age Manx monarchy, perhaps it can be used to shore up nonsaga evidence.

Many of the non-Manx literary sources regarding the Island create further confusion through vocabulary issues. Several of these sources appear to use remarkably similar words to describe Man and Anglesey. The linguistic entwining of Man and Anglesey (known in Welsh as Môn) may in fact have been purposeful as a way of politically connecting the two entities.¹¹ Recent studies have favored Man as the intended location of a challenging line in at least one of the very few tenth-century Welsh poems.¹² *Armes Prydein*, a fiery, prophetic political poem urging support for the ousting of the Anglo-Saxons from Britain, references the *Gwydyl Iwerdon Mon a Phrydyn*, "the Irish of Ireland and Anglesey (?) and Scotland."¹³ An interpretation of as *Man* would imply a political connection between Man and Ireland by the

in-depth examination of specific characters and dynasties connecting Man and Ireland. This study cannot replicate the work of these scholars but demonstrates the fractured nature of the references to Man.

8 For more information on the composition and historical value of the sagas, see Margaret Clunies Ross, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Old Norse-Icelandic Saga* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 39–41, and Gisli Sigurdsson, *The Medieval Icelandic Saga and Oral Tradition: A Discourse on Method*, trans. Nicholas Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 17–19.

9 Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson, "Introduction," *Njal's Saga*, trans. Magnusson and Pálsson (New York: Penguin Books, 1960), 9–31, at 9.

10 *Njal's Saga*, 184 (= *konung ór Mön, Íslendinga Sögur*, ed. Guðni Jónsson, Akureyri, Iceland: Odds Björnssonar, 1968, 193).

11 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 63. For a concise summary of the naming connections between these two islands starting with Bede, see Wilson, *Vikings*, 18–19.

12 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 48–49; Andrew Breeze, "Armes Prydein, Hywel Dda, and the Reign of Edmund of Wessex," *Études Celtiques* 33 (1997), 209–22, at 209. Thomas Charles-Edwards acknowledges that Môn could be Man, but argues that such a reading represents an unnecessary emendation; *Wales and the Britons 350–1064* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 501. The location referred to in this poetic line remains under debate.

13 *Armes Prydein: The Prophecy of Britain from the Book of Taliesin*, ed. Ifor Williams and trans. Rachel Bromwich (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1972), 2, line 10. The facing-page English translation reads, "the Irish of Ireland and Anglesey (?) and Scotland." While Bromwich proposes Anglesey (with a question mark) in the translation itself, the accompanying note admits the possibility that the phrase could refer to the Isle of Man (*Armes Prydein*, 21).

tenth century. In that case, the eleventh-century rulers of Dublin would not have forged connections in a vacuum, but instead seem to be operating within a preexisting power structure.

Literature from beyond the Island hints at the political situation in Man. In an important study, Seán Duffy argued that the Irish annals show that the Isle of Man was associated with the Hiberno-Scandinavian rule of Dublin, although he acknowledges the dearth of textual references to Man even in the Irish sources. He writes: "There is an almost total silence by Irish writers about the affairs of Man and the other Irish Sea islands for the first two-thirds of the eleventh century."¹⁴ Unfortunately, this coincides with the period under discussion in this chapter. Duffy builds a case for Man's connection to Dublin, starting from at least 1052. When Diarmait mac Máel na mbó forced Echmarcach mac Ragnaill out of Dublin and the kingship there, Echmarcach fled overseas. Duffy argues that Mac Ragnaill fled to Man.¹⁵ The evidence for Man being Echmarcach's refuge lies in an entry from the *Annals of Tigernach*: "Murchad, son of Diarmait son of Mael na mbó, invaded Man and took a tribute out of it, and defeated Ragnall's son."¹⁶ As Duffy points out, if the Mac Ragnall defeated in Man is Echmarcach, then he was likely to have been there since 1052.¹⁷ Furthermore, the type of tribute, *cáin*, exacted from Man is a right of kingship.¹⁸ The taking of this *cáin* by Murchad may indicate that Dublin had sovereign rights to Man, in that they could claim taxes normally associated with kingship.

A further argument revolves around the E recension of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which lists a "Iehmarc" as one of the subkings who submitted to Cnut.¹⁹ Benjamin Hudson suggests that this Iehmarc is Echmarcach, on grounds of both linguistics and our knowledge of scribal practices.²⁰

14 Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen," 98.

15 Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen," 99. See *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616*, ed. and trans. John O'Donovan (Dublin: s.n., 1849), 862.

16 Murchadh mac Diarmuda maic Mail na mbó do dhul a Manaind, co tuc cáin esti 7 cor' bris for mac Ragnaill, *Annals of Tigernach*, ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique* 16 (1895), 374–419; 17 (1896), 6–33, 116–263, 337–420; 18 (1897), 9–59, 150–303, at 16: 402.

17 Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen," 100. Charles-Edwards takes this to be Echmarcach, *Wales and the Britons*, 573.

18 Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen," 100; Francis J. Byrne, "Ireland and her Neighbors, c. 1014–1072," in *A New History of Ireland: Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 862–98, at 879.

19 *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. Michael Swanton (New York: Routledge, 1998), 159. This reference appears under the year 1031 in the E recension.

20 Benjamin T. Hudson, "Cnut and the Scottish Kings," *English Historical Review* 107, no. 423 (1992), 350–60, at 356. Hudson also gives a succinct summary of previous work on this debate.

He states, "Cnut would not waste his time meeting with non-entities."²¹ Therefore before Echmarcach became king of Dublin, he must already have ruled an important area of the British Isles.²² Building on this work, Kristen Bornholdt Collins has suggested that Echmarcach may already have ruled in the Isles by the 1020s.²³ This earlier reign, predating his kingship of Dublin, implies an even deeper connection between the rulers of Dublin and Man. Echmarcach may have expanded from his reign in Man to become King of Dublin, creating precedent for Godred Crovan to repeat this feat thirty-three years later. Already, the documentary sources begin to paint a picture of a political association between Dublin and Man. A deposed king of Dublin fled to a location which, presumably, he felt would be welcoming to him.²⁴ Ten years later, after the usurper had time to stabilize his new power in Dublin, Murchad invaded Man. The invocation of a right associated with kingship implies a political connection between the two locations.

As the rule of Dublin changed from Munster to Leinster, the new ruling family of Dublin quickly appeared in Man. The Irish records indicate that by 1073 the new ruling family of Dublin was present in Man only a year after assuming control in the Hiberno-Norse city.²⁵ The rapid move to control Man after the ascension to power in Dublin further indicates a connection between these two political units. By this point, the Irish chroniclers seemed to view the control of Man as connected to the rule of Dublin.

This connection between Man and Dublin did not immediately terminate after the successful invasion of Godred Crovan. However, the power dynamic shifted. The Rí Insi Gall (King of the Hebrides) also tried, and did temporarily, gain control of Dublin from 1091 to 1094 when Godrad Crovan

21 Hudson, "Cnut," 360.

22 It should be noted that while Hudson also agrees that Echmarcach held power in Man, he argues that the meeting with Cnut was likely because of Echmarcach's territory in southwest Scotland—"Cnut," 359.

23 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 69.

24 K.L. Maund, "The Welsh Alliances of Earl Ælfgar of Mercia and his Family in the Mid-eleventh Century," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 11 (1989), 181–90, at 186, makes the same point about the exiled Mercian earl Ælfgar, who successfully fought to regain his lands, helped by his alliance with the Welsh king Gruffudd ap Llywelyn. Maund notes the unlikelihood that "an exile from England (and a member of a family which had lost at least one member to Gruffudd's aggression), even with mercenaries accompanying him, would have risked an encounter with a powerful and potentially hostile Welsh ruler, on that ruler's own territory, unless he was sure of a moderately amicable reception."

25 *The Annals of Ulster (up to A.D. 1131)*, ed. by Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983), 508–9.